

COUNCIL POLICY

Subject: Neighborhood Characteristics of the Taaffe-Frances Heritage Neighborhood.

Policy Purpose

The Taaffe-Frances Heritage Neighborhood exemplifies a special part of Sunnyvale's cultural, social, political and architectural history. It is representative of architectural styles and a way of life that is a valuable reminder of the City's heritage. It is the purpose of this Council Policy to preserve those historic characteristics which make this neighborhood unique.

Policy Statement

The Taaffe-Frances Heritage Neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Sunnyvale. It has a concentration of older homes which have generally retained their original architectural features. The neighborhood has a rich and rare variety of interesting architectural styles. It was created in 1925 and 1927 by the PALJOSE Subdivision which contained the 500 blocks of Taaffe and Frances and the west side of Murphy Avenue. There are now 59 single family homes and two duplexes in the neighborhood. Lots are typically 6500 sq. ft.

The Taaffe-Frances neighborhood has a strong historic identity which is distinct from newer subdivisions in Sunnyvale. This neighborhood is oriented to the pedestrian rather than the automobile. There are generous parkway strip for shade trees and buffering pedestrians against traffic. Garages and cars are in back of the lot instead of predominating the front yard area. Entrées to the homes come off the sidewalks instead of the garage driveways. These characteristics which create a pedestrian orientation help make this neighborhood unique.

The older, distinct architectural styles and pedestrian orientation of the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood are a valuable reminder of Sunnyvale's heritage. In order to preserve this unique historic character, all alterations and new construction should be consistent with the following neighborhood characteristics.

1. Architectural Style

Homes in this neighborhood were built in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's. The predominant architecture is bungalow and period revival styles such as Spanish Colonial and English Tudor. Alterations and new additions should be consistent and integrated with the original architectural style of the home. Alterations on homes which are nonconforming with the predominate styles of the neighborhood, should be designed to conform to the neighborhood standard, if possible. New homes should be compatible with the scale and architectural theme of the neighborhood.

2. Garages

One of the key characteristics of this neighborhood is the detached garages which are located at the back of the homes with driveways down the side of the property. The detached garages have a major impact on the look and feel of the entire neighborhood. The location of the garage in the back results in fewer cars by the sidewalk, less pavement, more landscaping and more spacious sideyard setbacks. Alterations and new additions should retain the side driveways and rear garages. Whenever possible, new garages shall be built in back of the house with side driveways.

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3. Entries

Homes in this neighborhood typically have pathways to the front door which come off the sidewalk. Entries from the sidewalk should be retained for existing homes. Sidewalk pathways should be constructed if a new home is built.

4. Height

Most homes in the neighborhood are single-story with fairly low pitched roofs. There are six two-story homes. Most of these are older homes originally built as two-story or homes with dormers added to a high-pitched roof. They are generally compatible with the architectural styles and scale of the neighborhood. New second story additions should be carefully designed to be compatible with the predominant single story scale of the neighborhood.

5. Streetscape

The narrow streets, large parkway strips and Magnolia tree canopy are significant features of this neighborhood. Public improvement should enhance and preserve these features.

6. Fences

There are very few fences in the front setback area. Those that are in the front yard area are along the side property lines and are the traditional height of 3 or 4 feet. This creates a spacious, open feeling in the neighborhood. New fencing should not be constructed in the front setback area, except for 3 ft. fences along the side property lines.

7. Building Colors

Homes in this neighborhood have a traditional 2 color residential paint scheme. Trim in a contrasting color is especially effective on these older, more ornate homes. Most building color are blues, white, browns and tans. Paint colors for individual homes should not be restricted, except that outlandish colors which detract from the neighborhood would not be appropriate.

8. Setbacks

Homes in this neighborhood maintain a minimum 20 ft. front yard setback. The combination of the front setback and wider parkway strip create a deeper building setback from the road, which is a unique characteristic of the neighborhood. New construction should maintain the existing front setbacks in the neighborhood.